

VZCZCXRO6953
PP RUEHPOD
DE RUEHTI #0014 0081418
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 081418Z JAN 08
FM AMEMBASSY TIRANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6531
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 3244
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE 3032
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1237
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON 0051
RUEHPOD/AMEMBASSY PODGORICA 0058
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 5686
RUEHVJ/AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO 0703
RUEHSQ/AMEMBASSY SKOPJE 4464
RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB 3244
RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA 3725
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 3506
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2375
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

UNCLAS TIRANA 000014

SIPDIS

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AL](#)

SUBJECT: ALBANIA: RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN MAJORITY AND
OPPOSITION UNDER THE BUCHAREST GUN?

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Albania's first and second opposition parties, the Socialist Party (SP) and Movement for Socialist Integration (LSI), appear to be not only "willing to move forward" on reforms needed for NATO, but actively pushing for those reforms. Likewise, the majority appears willing to meet them half-way on the effort. We have heard preliminary reports of agreement on an agenda to move forward. If words are matched by deeds, Albania could realize the needed outstanding reforms before the Bucharest Summit. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) With the passage of Albania's peak holiday season, New Year's, and the return of political parties to Tirana, the April 2-4 deadline of the NATO Bucharest Summit may have moved to the forefront of political concentration. This first week of business has seen strong statements by SP Chair Edi Rama and LSI's General Secretary, calling for "a translation of political will into political products of reforms," in the words of LSI's Vasili. SP promised to draft legislation to present to Parliament when it reconvenes January 21 to move the process forward.

¶3. (U) SP also issued a written statement, faxed to Embassy and others in the international community and media, which acknowledged "the extraordinary importance of the April NATO Summit" for Albania. In it, the party expressed its "full support for all necessary required measures" to make an invitation possible and guaranteed "its readiness and decisiveness to accomplish" all measures. SP was "convinced of the necessity of overcoming historical political conflicts" and affirmed its "good will to create a political climate of trust and cooperation." (SP added a line of support for resolution of Kosovo status in a "synchronized process between legitimate Kosovo institutions and international partners.")

¶3. (SBU) An uncharacteristically gentle Speaker Topalli welcomed the opposition's readiness to join in the work needed for immediate reforms in order to receive a membership invitation. Topalli offered to call a meeting of the conference of parliamentary group chairpersons immediately, before Parliament reconvenes, in order to set the agenda for the next session. (Even while Parliament is adjourned, commissions and conferences continue their work.) Contacts have told us that a closed-door meeting between majority Democratic Party (DP) and SP leaders achieved concrete

progress in setting a preliminary agenda for judicial and electoral reform.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: If deeds follow words, Albania could realize needed electoral and judicial reforms well before the Bucharest Summit. Post will continue to urge them in that direction. END COMMENT.
CRISTINA